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Talking Points for the DDCI
(23 October 1983)

Situation Update as of 1500 EDT

According to the latest casualty reports, 135 US Marines have been killed in the bombing of the Marine headquarters at the Beirut airport. Another 59 are reported wounded. Rescue operations continue. [REDACTED]

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The bombing at the French MNF building has resulted in at least 25 dead, according to press reports. Only about 75 soldiers were at the facility at the time of the bombing. [REDACTED]

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Throughout the day, rescue operations at the airport have been hampered by small arms fire coming from nearby Shia neighborhoods

- There have been no Marine casualties as a result of the sniping.
- Ambassador Fairbanks telephoned Shia leader Nabih Barri earlier to ask him to put a stop to the sniping. Barri promised to do so, but after a short lull the sniping again picked up. [REDACTED]

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Responsibility for the Attacks

No group in Lebanon has yet claimed responsibility for the attacks. [REDACTED]

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A government official in Abu Dhabi has informed our Embassy there unofficially that an unidentified caller claiming to be in Kuwait took responsibility today in the name of the "Sabra and Shatila Organization". The caller spoke in a Lebanese or Palestinian dialect and said that the organization believed a US general and the regional chief of the CIA were in the building at the time of the attack.

- The implication that the attacks were carried out to avenge the massacres in September 1982 would suggest Palestinian involvement, but we have no additional information lending credibility to the caller's claim. [REDACTED]

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Our best judgment is that Iranian-supported radical Shia groups were responsible for the attacks.

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-- [REDACTED]

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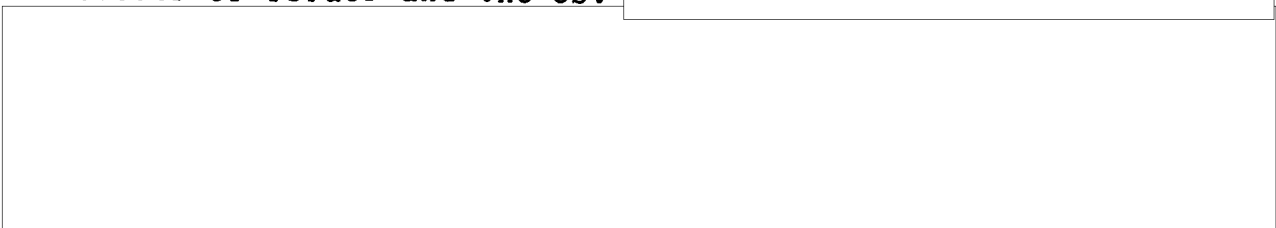
[Redacted]
[Redacted] Shia radicals supported by Iran were principally responsible for the sniper attacks on the Marines. [Redacted]

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The Iranian Government has publicly condemned the cease-fire in Lebanon and American and French involvement there. Tehran has stated that any interruption of the fighting only serves the interests of Israel and the US. [Redacted]



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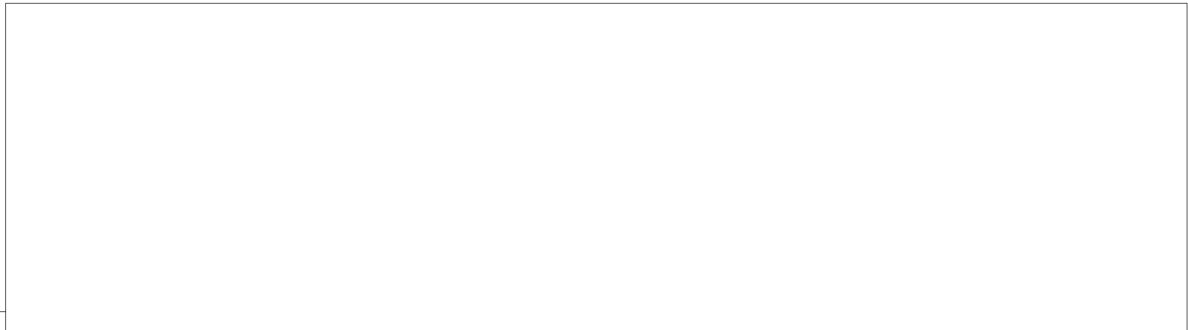
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There is also a possibility of Syrian involvement.

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at a minimum we believe Damascus has turned a blind eye to the activities of its Iranian allies and provided indirect support by allowing them to move through Syria into Lebanon. Syrian intelligence officials in Lebanon may be providing additional assistance. 

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[REDACTED]
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SUBJECT: Talking Points for the DDCI

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DDI/NESA/AI/L [REDACTED] (23Oct83)

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[REDACTED]
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